APRIL, 1987
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M.A.C.E. JOURNAL

"Devoted Exclusively To The Atari Computer User"

Published by the Michigan Atari Computer Enthusiasts

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Tom Sturza

I recently wrote to LJK Enterprises, Inc., to inquire about the update policy on their excellent data base program, Data Perfect. I now own an ATARI 130XE and wished to take advantage of the extra memory. Their reply follows:

Your version of Data Perfect can be updated to the current version (2.06) by sending the original disk and a check for $10.

People with version 1 of Data Perfect can update by sending the original disk and a check for $30. The additional cost covers the new documentation that will be included with the update.

Updating your program will only allow it to print to a printer without the use of a translator disk pre-boot. As of this time, there has been no release of Data Perfect that will take advantage of the extra memory in the 130XE.

If we can be of further assistance, do not hesitate to call or write.

Sincerely, Leo, LJK Tech Support
LJK Enterprises, Inc.
1351 Yves
Manchester, Missouri 63011-3669
(314) 527-6909

Very interesting ... and yet, it wasn't the answer I was really looking for! What do you think? Why not write LJK and let them know your feelings! If they don't know that there is still a market for their products, they probably won't do anything about it. Maybe our letters will convince them that there is still money to made from ATARI 8-bit software!

FROM YOUR EDITOR

R. Charles Sibthorpe

Looking at the Journal lately one would almost assume that MACE is going in the same direction as ANTIC (tm) or ANALOG (tm) with more and more material being printed about the ST. Well folks, let me say this, recently most of the articles submitted to the Journal are about the ST. It would seem that the market for 8-bit articles has dried up. I cannot print material I don't have. So lets get on the stick and submit articles on the machine that brought us together in the first place, the 8-bit ATARI.

Last month we featured a MACE word search. I hope you enjoyed it!!! The solution is in this month's issue. Chuck Norris, SYSOP for the Superboard, is continuing his tutorial for using the MACE ST based BBSysytem. There is an interesting article by Gordon Totty on page 15 describint the corporate structure of ATARI.

Over the past several months that I have been your Editor, I have had to work under two different deadlines. I put in an average 60-80 hour work week at Allen-Bradley and almost a full 40 hour week for MACE. As a result of this vey busy schedule, I will require your articles be in to me , or any one of the Editorial staff no later than the first of the month. Any submissions after the first of the month will NOT appear in the following Journal. This will allow me more time to "assemble" your Journal in the manner which you have become accustomed to and which you expect.

Thank You,
R. Charles Sibthorpe
MACE Editor

APRIL, 1987
Volume 7 No. 4

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MACE JOURNAL

THE COMPUTER MAGAZINE FOR THE PRGRESSIVE ATARI USER

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Call them sometime. If you of any not listed, please let us know.

The Mace Superboard ST

by

Chuck Norris
SYSOP of MACE Superboard

Here we are again to show off the newest of the MACE BBS'S! This month we will take a look at the message bases.

As you enter the message base you will be shown a menu like this;

1) General
2) ST help
3) 8 Bit help
* [A]ll new msgs.

The star inticates that there is a message in the base that you have not seen. All need be done is to hit the -A- command and it will show you all the new messages in every base that has a star next to it.

Lets say that you want to look at base #1. When you see the "MACE-->" prompt hit 1 and it will send you to the #1 base that is called General. Once inside the base you will see a screen that looks like this;

Forem ST msg bse: General
91 messages-high message recieved 20
continous scroll off

If continous scroll is off then you may use the message sub commands at the end of each message.

The user is then prompted with this screen if he hits the return key or the -?-.

A-check for messages to or from you
B-check for msg from you
C-check for msg to you
D-delete a msg
E-enter a msg
F-read a flagged msg found by the A,B,C command
L-locate/search for msg text
M-read msg marked with the S command
R-read messages
S-scan /mark msg
O-other msg bases
Q-quit to main menu
Y-set the read all(A) for msg bases to be read(you must set this yourself)

I think that all of these commands are easy to figure out and nothing more be said of them...

Now lets enter a message to the system. Lets say that you are already in a message base, So you hit the E command. You see....

Message base command editor
/A-abort the message
/S-save the message
/W-word wrap toggle(this sets the system so all ya have to do is type in the message. The BBS will add the returns for you.

You must use the slash(/) before the command in the editor to make it work and it must be on a new line as well. So lets do it...

1) This is a test of the message base
2) This is how we end and save the message
3) /S

this message will now be saved!

I covered what most people have trouble with in this article however, if you still have questions then please let me know on the BBS or in person.

MICHIGAN ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING: 2/17/87

President Tom Sturza called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm in the small auditorium at the Southfield Civic Center. He asked that MACE members support the stores that advertise in the MACE Journal and asked that members state that they are MACE members when buying from these stores.

Tom announced that there are only approximately 400 active memberships. This is the reason why we are now holding the meeting in small auditorium. He also announced that the officers of MACE have decided that only paid members should be able to attend future meetings as non-paying persons are reaping the same benefits as paid members. Effective as of the March meeting, non-members will be able to purchase (for $2) a Guest Membership, good for one meeting only, which will entitle them to attend a general meeting and the new user forum. They will be able to purchase Journals at cover price but will not be allowed to buy from the disk library.

Barb Franczyk announced that the 'Taricon II convention that was being planned for August has been canceled and the planning committee has disbanded. Atari could not seem to honor it's previous promises of advance financial support, even after such promises were made by Mr. Neil Harris, Director of Marketing Communications. MACE will voluntarily support any other club that wishes to sponsor this 'Taricon and all information to date regarding same will be forwarded if needed.

****

By Atari's own doing, there will be no MACE sponsored 'Taricon in August

The members of the now-disbanded planning committee deserve a round of applause for their marathon efforts!

-Mike

****

Chris Samuals demonstrated M.U.L.E. by Electronic Arts. This oldie but goodie features excellent sound and graphics on the 8-bit Ataris and was requested by several novice owners. Chris also polled the attending membership to see if there was any interest in ordering MACE t-shirts. He noted that a minimum order of 25 is required and they would sell for approximately $8 (which the membership approved.) Chris also asked that members make use of the suggestion box if there are any specific requests for demos at general membership meetings.

There was a demonstration by Innovative Concepts of their "Ram-Aid" device. It is an internal modification for the XE computer that will leave a ramdisk intact during a cold start. The device is activated by pressing a button on the back of the computer, then pressing reset instead of flipping the power switch. This was demonstrated by switching between Print Shop and Atari Writer files that were stored in ramdisk. The device sells for $24.95, installed.

Mike Olin
MACE Rec. Sec'y
12/17/86

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A new twist.....

The Mace ST Superboard has a new twist for the ST users. COLOR!!!!! When you call the system make sure that you are using FLASH (the terminal program) and in the ATARI mode. Then check out the new screens in COLOR! Sorry to say, that the ST people are the only callers that can enjoy this. But, as most of you are aware color is not a normal feature found on BBSystems (at least I've never seen one before). So call us and check it out!

Yes Sharie, The ST is able to do all kinds of things as you will soon see!

Chuck Norris
SYSOP MACE Superboard

****

UNCLASSIFIED

WANTED: I have the cartridge version of ATARI's EASTERN FRONT (1941) I purchased it used, and never received a copy of the instructions. Can anyone Xerox me a copy of the instructions?

Write to: Michael Bonkowski
2765
27712 Perth
Livonia, Michigan 48154

Thank You.

****

WANTED: Your ad here. M.A.C.E. Ads get results. Free to all M.A.C.E. members. See any Officer or the Journal Editor.

****

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Father Atari!

by

Chuck Noris

I was wondering just who has been into the Atari and its uses for the longest amount of time. Well it seems through some research than our good friend and long time MACE supporter, Jim Steinbrecher! He is also been know as, Modem Man, BBS pioneer, and of course, Father Atari!.

Jim graduated from Redford High school and served in the Army with Korea and Vietnam experience, then continued on in the National Guard.

Jim has worked as a commercial programmer and other various computer fields then finally opened his store (Sector One) in 1985. Sector One supports all the Atari computers, from the old 400 days all the way through the new ST line. Just to mention a few details that he has going are, sales, service, education, consulting, custom programming, training and many more things that you may not find in his window display!

Not only does he have a fine store, but he also has the longest running Atari BBS. This is a story in itself! He first brought up the system in June of 1982 with the Atari 800, 810 drive, 820 printer, 850 interface and the Hayes 300 (like real old) baud modem. He ran with the original AMIS BBS program wrote by a old Atarian, Tom Giese! Now we find it 1987 and good 'ole Jim still has the BBS going strong! But, a bit different. Now he has the 320XE (modified 130XE) 1050 drive, 1200 baud modem, and the Supra 10 meg hard drive. Jim has made alot of modifications to the bbs since then but still been there when we needed him!

From a long time Atarian. Thanks Jim and from MACE as well!

METROPOLITAN DETROIT AREA BBSystems

The following is a listing of BBSystems that support ATARI Personal Computers. A BBS has to be up 24 hours/day, 7 days/week to be included in this list.

****

A.R.C.A.D.E.	(3)	978-8087	*3/12
ATARI ADVOCATE	(3)	398-3078	*3/12
ATARI CASTLE	(3)	278-3901	*3/12
ATARI TOOLBOX	(3)	792-8357	*3/12
BAUDWAY	(3)	399-1775	*3/12
BOILER ROOM	(3)	562-4601	*3/12
BONE-YARD	(3)	582-2816	*3
BUNKY'S BOARD	(3)	546-3689	*3/12
COLLEGE BOARD	(3)	478-9647	A*3/12
COUNTRY PEDDLER	(3)	449-8544	*3/12
CRAZY HOUSE	(3)	278-1727	*3/12 /24
ERROR 130	(3)	433-1088	*3
FREEDOM BOARD	(3)	771-4126	*3/12
LOCKER ROOM	(3)	381-6536	*3/12
M.A.C.E. EAST	(3)	754-9865	*3/12
M.A.C.E. SUPERBOARD ST	(3)	543-8349	*3/12
M.A.C.E. WEST	(3)	582-0657	*3/12
MAGIC CLIPBOARD	(3)	368-6882	*3/12
MAGIC NORTH	(3)	978-1685	*3
MOLIN'S DEN	(3)	420-0407	*3/12
TRADER ST	(3)	433-3850	*3/12
SURFBOARD	(3)	547-5671	*3/12
V.O.I.C.E.	(3)	532-8410	*3/12
W.A.U.G.	(3)	662-3689	*3

A = LOGON in ASCII
(3) = 313 Area Code
*3 = 300 BAUD
*3/12 = 300 & 1200 BAUD
*3/12/24 = 300 & 1200 & 2400 BAUD

If you know of a Detroit Area, 24 hour, 7 days a week BBSystem, that supports ATARI computers, please send a post card or letter to the M.A.C.E. P.O. Box. We will normally print this list at least three times a year.

M.A.C.E.
Michigan Atari Computer Enthusiasts

Reviews — By Paul R. Wheeler

This page was designed using "The Publishing Partner™ (TPP) by SoftLogik and shows some of it's feature but not all, as I am still learning the many things it is capable of doing. It is a powerful and useful tool which I am sure you will be seeing and hearing more of in the future. It was printed using a dot-matrix but the results are truly professional when a laser printer is employed and in the near futre I hope to present such a page.

But for now, lets show some of the things this baby can do!

Backslant, **Bold**, Double underline, *Italicized*, Mirrored, Outlined, Reversed text, Shadowed, ~~Strike-through~~, Underlined, nbsjqe qpxo.

wide and tall texts are as simple to do as a click of the mouse button or the use of an alternate key (you are allowed to do either), and combinations such as ***Underlined Italicized*** The size of the fonts are just as easy to change, you can go from a tiny to a whopping...

72pts

in the same manner. You can write the text using your favorite word processer and spell checker and import it to your page. The same can be done with pictures made with Degas, NuVision, Printmaster, Tny, etc. It is so *easy*, a real piece of cake with lots of frosting.

TPP comes with a well written 160+ page manual that was written entirely on the program, was printed with a lasser printer, so right away you have a visual reference of it's capabilities.

SoftLogik™ was founded by 2 individuals with a vision that the Atari ST™ would become the desktop publishing machine and TPP is the results of that dream. And with TPP you get more than a wonderful product, you also get their terrific customer support. A week after I had mailed in my registration card, I received two disks with updates. Yes, I did say two, one for each of the monitors available for the ST's.

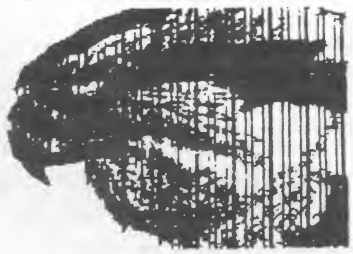
The manual is divided into four parts:

1). The 10 Minute Tour.
2). The Tutorial.
3). A Step by Step Instructions for Common Operations.
4). References.

The 10 minute tour is just that, a brief introduction showing the basics of the program, while the Tutorial goes into more details and has you loading and editing the prepared pages, complete with pictures, in no time at all. The Step by Step goes into greater details of each command and function, while the Reference section gives a complete detailed instructions of all of the operations of the program.

There are several samples included on the disk and one of them is a recipe card called Popcorn, and from those who have tried it, I heard it is very good and it beats the box with a prize for flavor. I have included it below.

Maybe in the future, the MACE Journal will be prepared with such a program and if so, the Publish Partner would be a very good choice.



I won't go into all of the details of the features that would make this an editor's dream but some are. Selecting a page size, from legal to a business card or a size of your own preference. Double-sided documents, collateing with auto page numbering, scaling the page size, are just a few of the options available. While working on a document, you even have choice of the veiwing size and multiple pages. It has the capabilty of searh, search and replace, copy or move to buffer for later recall. You can be working on 14 pages at one time and all can be saved as a single document. That's it for now except for a great big thank you! to SoftLogik Inc. for giving the Atari such an awarding program and trusting its buyers with an unprotected program..

Carmel Popcorn

1 cup or 2 sticks butter or margerine
2 cups firmly packed brown sugar
1/2 cup light syrup
6 quarts of popped corn
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 tsp of baking soda
1 tsp vanilla

Melt butter in large saucepan, stir in brown sugar, corn syrup and salt. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly, boil without stirring for 5 mins. Remove from heat; Stir in baking soda and vanilla. Gradually pour over popped corn in two large shallow baking pans 13X 9. Mix well. Bake in 250 degree oven for 1 hour, stirring every 15 mins. Remove from oven and cool completely Break apart. Store in lightly covered container.

PUBLISHING PARTNER REVIEW

by

Bruce Hansford Kettering, Ohio

Publishing Partner is the newest entry into Desktop Publishing for the ATARI ST. It is produced by SoftLogik Corporation of St.Louis. It is a mouse-driven program that is a combination of typesetting, graphics, and forms design. I produced our club's 10 page newsletter exclusively with PP and used every possible feature I could find in the program. The following are my findings.

One of the first things I noticed about the program that I liked was the fact that it is not copy protected so it can be totally installed on a hard-disk. It is also smart enough (unlike VIP and some others) to be totally run from folders (sub-directories) and remember from one time you run it to the next where you keep your documents, text files, and graphic files, even if they're all in different folders or even different drives. That impressed me.

This is a true Desktop Publishing program, configured very similarly to the Pagemaker for the Macintosh, which is considered the "ultimate" in DP so far. From the manual's introduction: "First you can do a rough page design by creating columns and graphics and then start adding text. See how it fits. See how it looks. See how it flows on to the next page. Make some changes. Try a different type face, or a different size, or some borders, or even some pictures. You'll see instantly if your new idea works or not." This is what is known as a WYSIWYG type program (What You See Is What You Get) that shows on the screen what your final product will look like in print.

The program is very easy to use as almost everything is available from the drop-down menus and the "toolbox" on the right side of the screen. I recommend reading the manual before you attempt any important projects to catch the few tricky features not in the menus, however.

The Toolbox allows you to switch between text mode and object mode for manipulating the different parts of your document. The text mode enables you to enter text from the keyboard or from an ASCII text file into columns you have established or outside of columns if you want more free-standing text. The object editor allows you to create, resize, reposition, or delete columns, or alter attributes of your columns, or resize, reposition, or delete graphic objects such as lines, boxes, and circles. The scissors allows you to crop sections of pictures you create or import. The PIC option allows you to import DEGAS, NeoChrome, or Tinyview pictures into your document.

The next eight boxes in the Toolbox allow you to generate your own circles, ellipses, boxes, rounded boxes, vertical or horizontal lines, diagonal lines, polygons, or do freehand drawing on your document. The next section in the Toolbox controls page manipulation. It allow you to establish "master page(s)" which enable you to create text or graphics that will be automatically duplicated on each succeeding page. You can do a single or double master page. The single will duplicate on every page following the first. The double will allow opposite page differences for book-type output (ie. every other page duplication of features). You can move from page to page or type in a page number and go directly to that page.

The last three items in the Toolbox are LINE, FILL, and COLOR. LINE allows control of line type (solid, dashes, dotted, etc.) and line width. You can

even create your own line style with the line editor. The line type you choose will be used when generating any of the above mentioned graphic objects (ie. boxes, circles, etc.). The FILL options allow you to define the fill pattern you want to use for drawing circles, boxes, and ellipses. You can design your own fill pattern also. The color option allows you to define the color you want when placing objects on the screen as well as color print-outs if you have a color printer!

The drop-down menus are File, Create-Layout, View, Style, Format, and Edit. The File menu starts you out when beginning a new document with the ability to select a page size an shape from 1 inch by 1 inch to 18 inches by 18 inches, double or single sided, portrait (vertical) or landscape (horizontal). You can load a previously made document, append to your existing document and save your document to disk. You can import text or graphics, or export text to disk. You can format a disk, delete files, and rename files (very handy features) from this menu also. Your printing options are in this menu as well, including selecting which printer driver you want to use and which port you will be sending to (or to disk file). You can indicate which pages or series or pages to print (ascending or descending), how many copies to print, whether to print full size or reduced size print, which colors to use, and whether or not to collate your printed output if you want more than one copy of a multiple-paged document. Then you can save this configuration to a config file so you don't have to re-create all of this the next time you want to generate a product. Pretty neat!

The program was created to take advantage of the ATARI GDOS for printing very high-resolution products. However ATARI has not published it's full GDOS yet, so you are limited to standard Epson-type printing which is a bit limited. The manual explains how to use the GDOS printing capabilities, but an addendum came with the manual telling you to ignore the GDOS portion of the manual until GDOS is published. I called SoftLogik and was told they have no idea when the full version of GDOS will be available, but a program upgrade will be available as soon as GDOS comes out. Because of this limitation, you can only use the fonts that have a matching printer font file on the disk. There was only one on my copy of the program, Helvetica. If you use any of the other screen fonts such as standard, or Times, the printer driver will try to convert it to Helvetica and lose track of where it's printing and create all sorts of weird outputs. I know, I tried it. The very helpful gentleman that I talked to at the company said they are publishing a fonts disk sometime in February with several more screen and printer fonts.

By the way, if you happen to have a Postscript type laser printer, you can print out a document of very good quality with this program. Isn't that what Desktop Publishing is all about? If you do not own a Postscript compatible device but know someone who does, you can load the Postscript output driver and select "Print to Disk" and send your print file to any Postscript compatible printer and you can have a great laser-printed product anyway.

The Create-Layout menu allow you to create the general outline of your document. You can create perfectly placed columns, generate automatic routing of text from column to column, establish tabs and snap-to guides (left justify lines for object orientation), insert pages, delete pages, insert objects into your master page from another page, insert automatic page numbering, and establish your measuring system (Picas, Inches, or Centimeters). The main drawback in this area is the inability to import or export previously created pages. This I found to be very annoying when trying to generate a 10 page newsletter which evolves over a 3 week period. You can save your work one page at a time, but that eliminates text flow from a column on one page to a column on another page.

The View menu allows you to view the page from several different perspectives.

You can view 2 pages at a time, side by side on one screen (not very readable), or you can choose from several options: full page, 50%, actual size, 200%, full width, or you can set your own user view scale and save that in your configuration file. You can bring the different objects (columns, text objects, or graphic objects) to the front if you have overlapping objects, or send objects to the back for different viewing effects. You can toggle the rulers which line up the left side and across the top of the document which can measure your document in inches, centimeters, or picas (1/6 inch) and shows hash marks on each ruler indicating your cursor position. You can show text routing indicators. You can toggle the Show Pictures option to enable faster screen refreshing without the pictures. Show Column Outline indicates exact column locations, and Show grid permits a background grid display behind your objects for positioning ease.

The Style menu enables you to choose from the available fonts and point sizes (from 3 to 216 points, where 72 points = 1 inch). You can also select the following text attributes: Backslant, Bold, Double Underline, Italicize, Light, Mirror, Outline, Reverse Text, Shadow, Strike Through, Tall (Double height), Underline, Upside Down, and Wide (Double width). You can click on one or more attributes and then what you type from then on will show those attributes. You can also highlight text and change the attributes by clicking on the ones you want. The Format menu is sort of an extension of the Style menu. You can make your text Superscript, Subscript, or Baseline (normal) Script. You can change text to all upper case or all lower case. You can cause text to block left, center, or right. You can have your text character justified (like newspapers do) or word justify (like a word processor). You can alter margins, line spacing, and character spacing. You can also control manual kerning and hyphenating. Kerning is the character spacing between any two characters. One thing missing here is automatic hyphenation, which would be a very handy feature.

The Edit menu allows you to delete highlighted text or text objects or graphics. You can search and replace text within columns, copy or move text or graphics to or from a copy buffer for simple manipulation of your document. You may also toggle the insert mode from this menu.

To top this all off, basically everything you can do in this program with your mouse (mostly everything), you can also do with keyboard commands using combinations of the Alternate, Esc, or Control keys with letter keys. This is what is commonly known as the "expert mode" for people who are very familiar with the product and want to work faster than using a mouse will allow. And even better, you can combine these keyboard combinations into "macros" to save to the function keys. A macro can contain up to 63 characters and can be used on any of the 10 function keys.

Publishing Partner has one serious drawback that I have not mentioned so far. It does not do "wrap around". That is, if you have a graphic or text object overlaying a column of text, you can not have the text wrap around the object. I would like to see this added in a future upgrade.

To run PP you need a minimum of 512k memory, one disk drive and TOS on ROM. It will run in medium or high res. In fact you get two disks with the program, one is the monochrome version and the other, the color version. As I only have a color monitor, I can only discuss that version. I was very happy with what I saw, even though I had to view my text in actual size to be able to read it. The mono version is most likely much clearer.

The manual is very easy to read and has a good reference section and full index. The entire manual was typeset with PP and printed on a laser printer. Very impressive. All in all, I found Publishing Partner to be a very useful, easy to learn, and easy to use program. The support available was impressive, as my call (after hours) was answered promptly and efficiently, and my problem

(remember the printer font problem?) was recognized and solved instantly, courteously, and with no hassle. Considering the price, which is listed at $149 but if you look around, you should be able to get for around $100, I would say that PP is an excellent value. If I were Info World, I'd probably rate PP at about an 8.0. If you ever put out any kind of newsletter or bulletin, or need to create any type of forms, or just like to mess around with graphics and text on a computer, I highly recommend this product.

****

WANTED: Your articles for print in the MACE Journal. 8-Bit or the new 16-bit ST Line. I cannot print what I do Not have. MACE Editor

****

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MORE ON ICONS

By Hugh McLean

Apparently my article in the December M.A.C.E. Journal caused more of a response than I had ever anticipated. My intent was simply to add a little color to the 8-16 bit controversy by playing "Devils Advocate", with a little "Humorous Satire", which I felt to be a legitimate literary device.

Unfortunately, instead, I seem to have incited a call to arms with the ST SIG. Sorry guys, I didn't think you would take it so personal. If that wasn't enough, even the M.A.C.E. prez. has been catching "flack". <<PLEASE>> ... the article was an <editorial> and does not reflect the views of M.A.C.E. in any way.

I've been an 8 bit user for quite a few years, and I appreciate it for much more than a <neat> game machine. If you own an 8 bit machine, don't just throw it out because there is a "new kid on the block". There are a lot of really functional uses for the 8 bit computer. Or, if your husband just bought a new ST, please don't make him take it back - there are some really exciting new uses being developed for it that promise to be very functional.

****

ERRATTA

Last month I published the control codes for double column printing that I use with Atariwriter Plus, the published codes were in error. The following codes are correct;

crtl R 45 crtl M 51

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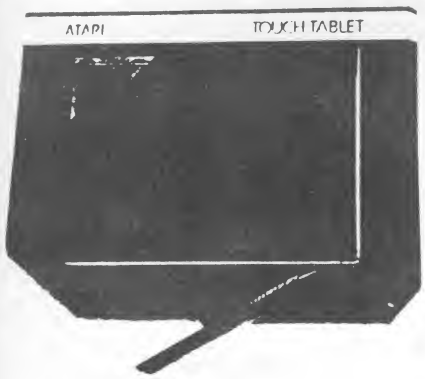

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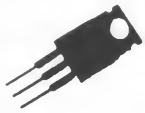

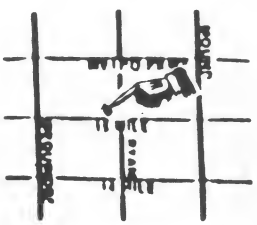

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ATARI CORPORATION

by Gordon Totty

I did some reading about Atari Corporation recently, but before we get to it let me pass on the following that I copied from a recent issue of VERBATIM, The Language Quarterly (XIII,2). In an article titled "Our Playful Vocabulary" Burt Hochberg of Games Magazine wrote:

"Atari This Japanese word, familiar as the name of a leading American home computer manufacturer, is from the game of go, where it signifies a threat to capture one or more of the opponent's pieces. Like the warning check in chess, it is not spoken during serious play."

Boy, the things you can learn around here! Did you know that "check" is not spoken during serious chess games? I sure didn't, but never got a chance to offend anyone with my ignorance. (A leading manufacturer???)

Well, enough talk of games. We Atarians are a serious lot and do not want to trifle with games when there is more serious matter at hand. The title of this piece is apparently the name of a leading American home computer manufacturer and I have done some reading, serious reading, about this outfit recently. I have read the stock prospectus for Atari's November 1986 public offering of 4,500,000 shares of its common stock at $11.50 per share. An interesting document, folks.

But before we turn the cover on it together I must offer some cautions or qualifications. I am NOT a stock expert. I do not wish to give stock advice, either pro or con. I will try to just pass on to you some interesting facts and observations as reported in or gleaned from the prospectus. If I offer my opinion, I will try to make it clear that it is just my opinion, not a "fact". Just to keep you cautious, by the way, a Paine Webber opinion printed in boldface on the cover of the prospectus is, "AN INVESTMENT IN THESE SECURITIES INVOLVES A HIGH DEGREE OF RISK."

First of all, as of the day I am writing this you cannot get the shares for $11.50 anymore. They are traded on the American Stock Exchange and on January 12, 1987 closed at $19.25 a share! This is a whopper of an increase of $7.75 or 67% in only two months. If our beloved Editor reads this far, he might be motivated to insert a more recent price and date in the space between the brackets [ ]. If he didn't, you have some space to doodle in if or when you find this boring.

The latest Atari was founded in May 1984 by Jack Tramiel and in July 1984 acquired certain assets from Warner Communications, Inc. (WCI) I never realized that for two months in 1984 there were two Atari companies, Jack's and Warner's. At that point, however, Jack's probably existed only in a lawyer's briefcase. I read closely to try to determine how much was paid to WCI and either it wasn't considered relevant, wasn't intended to be made clear, or I do not read as well as I always hoped I did. It was not clear to me. In fact, it was not clear to WCI or Jack Tramiel from 1984 until August, 1986! This is because they had agreed in 1984 that the price would be subject to adjustment based upon a final evaluation of the assets, etc. and this evaluation wasn't concluded until August, 1986. During that interim, WCI accrued interest on the purchase obligation at 17%. Further, WCI made $24.7 million in working capital loans (at 10.5% interest) to Atari. Assuming all went according to plan, late last year Atari/Tramiel gave WCI 7.1 million shares of Atari stock, worth $81.7 million at $11.50/share, and $36.1 million cash to close the deal. If we

deduct from this the $24.7 million of loans (I have no idea how much the interest was), then WCI may have been paid about $93 million (even less, excluding interest) by Tramiel. Then again, there may have been much more to this than I saw in the prospectus.

Note that Jack Tramiel did not have to go to his own checkbook to get all this money. The stock proceeds came from the "public". My point here is not to criticize this at all; I am merely noting how big business can operate. Selling stock is a time honored way of raising "das kapital" (no capitals intended) in Western societies. And we can be sure that the public that paid $11.50 is very happy to have done so at this point, anyway, given today's $19.25 price. WCI is part of this happy public, too.

What did WCI hand over for this? What did Jack Tramiel get for the money? A massive inventory of 600XL and 800XL computers, disk drives, printers, 2600 and 5200 model video games, game software, and the Atari name and logo for exclusive use in computer and consumer products. WCI kept the right to the Atari name and logo for use in coin operated arcade video games. The "new" Atari also owns rights to approximately 40 patents in the field of optical display holography and is sublicensing these rights to American Bank Note. It is not clear if these rights came from WCI or elsewhere. Atari has "no current plans to manufacture holograms". Other assets were acquired as well as associated debts and liabilities, but specific details are lacking. I was able to estimate the value that WCI carried the inventory at to be about $268 million dollars! That, folks, is a lot of 800XLs, etc.

Having got all this neat stuff, Tramiel and associates had to move fast to stay in business. I think we can admire their success to date, as businessmen certainly, even if we have various bones to pick about service, support, or whatever. As I recall from magazine articles, production was moved overseas, payroll was cut, certain facilities were shut down and sold, and all costs were trimmed to bare necessity levels. And Chrysler ... oops, I mean Atari ... survived, and is now on the road back to business health and competitiveness. Atari lost $62.8 million from May 17, 1984 to year end 1984, lost $14.3 million in 1985, and made a profit of $12.4 million in the first six months of 1986. That, in a soft home computer market, is what you call your "turn around". Not a bad job.

During this period, most of that massive inventory was peddled at a loss, I assume largely to keep enough cash flowing to stay alive. We all remember the "fire sale prices" (I bought two drives, two computers, and one modem during this period, and marvelled at the low prices). Now, (opinion, people) if you noted what was said above about taking time to determine the final purchase price, you might conclude, as I have, that it was WCI, not Atari/Tramiel, that felt the loss hardest as inventory was dumped below "cost". If it couldn't be sold at WCI book values (if those are the values that were used by Atari in its statements), then it wasn't worth that much and it follows that Atari/Tramiel shouldn't pay WCI those values for it.

This WCI inventory accounted for 97% of Atari's early sales, but as the inventory has declined and the new products have come to dealer shelves, this percentage has declined to 9% in the three month period ending June 30, 1986. In that latest reported period, computers were 64% of sales; video games were 27%.

Other healthy trends are evident in Atari's research and development costs and marketing and distribution expenses. Research costs are steadily increasing as Atari invests more in its future. Rising marketing and distribution costs make me believe Atari is getting more aggressive in its market. For one thing, I notice more Atari advertising is appearing and not just in Atari dedicated magazines.

The Atari Faires and Taricon II are also examples.

There is a strategy, or objective, stated in the prospectus. Atari's objective is to "offer in the ST series advanced microcomputer memory capacity and processing speed technology and to price the ST series as an industry leader based on price-to-memory capacity and price-to-processing speed." Very simply stated, isn't it? It is even more simply put in the advertising slogan, "Power without the price". They mean it, and they have done it so far. The 520ST was voted "Computer of the Year" in Europe and "Computer Value of the Year" by InfoWorld magazine. As of September 15, 1986 over 150,000 ST systems were sold worldwide. Notice ...alas... no mention of an objective that would seem to support any further meaningful investment in 8-bit hardware.

Product development plans mentioned include additional internal memory (two and four megabyte versions), enhanced color resolution and spectrum capacity, a dedicated graphics co-processer with five times faster graphics, a laser printer and a UNIX-based multi-user, multi-tasking microcomputer system.

The prospectus mentions that there is no guarantee that any of this research will come to successful conclusion, but I believe that the stuff mentioned here could be taken more seriously than the usual magazine rumors or sales convention talk.

Many other risks to the future of the new Atari are mentioned in the prospectus. Caveat emptor, or something like that! These include:

**Recent slow growth of the industry.

**The short history of the new company; not too much staying power demonstrated yet.

**The fact that Atari has no established line of credit, though they plan to seek one. What happens if they can't get credit? There will be no more loans from WCI.

**Intense competition from IBM, Apple, Commodore, Tandy, and Compaq, all of which seem to have more software support, more customer loyalty, and better dealer acceptance. Further, they are all larger with considerably greater resources and well established product lines. Atari presenly has 800 dealers in the United States.

**Risk of failure of research to produce enough new products. As of September 15, 1986 Atari had 80 employees engaged in computer product development.

**Need for more software. The prospectus mentioned that there are 300 software products available from U.S. vendors and an equal number available from vendors outside this country. It also points out that Atari has received over 3,000 orders for its software development package for the ST. Atari believes that Microsoft is working on programs for the ST.

**Dependence on key personnel; aggressive recruiting of skilled personnel by competitors.

**Risks associated with Atari's rather high level of international sales (value of dollar, trade restrictions, etc.). Atari distributes its products in about 50 countries outside the U.S.

**All the production comes from one 200,000 square foot plant in Tam-Shui, Taiwan. The plant uses modern equipment, including wave solderers and robotic circuit placing equipment. Nevertheless, a risk of supply interruption exists.

**The Tramiel family owns 52% of the common stock, and what they want to do will be done!

Quite a list, isn't it? It is intended to be enough disclosure to make any investor think twice. In spite of the enthusiastic reception of the stock to date, all of the above risk factors are still hanging over the company. But I would like to dispute the last one, somewhat. A case can be made, it seems to me, that the Tramiel ownership is as much advantage as something to list under risk factors.

Make no mistake about it; an investment in Atari is an investment of sorts in the Tramiel family. Jack is the boss. His sons Sam, Garry, and Leonard are three of the top dozen directors and executive officers. With dad, they represent a third of the top echelon. By the way, 13 members of the Tramiel family own stock in Atari.

Another member of the group with obvious connections to the family apart from the business is Leonard Schreiber, Jack Tramiel's lawyer for over 20 years. Looking at the top dozen another way, ten of them came from Commodore! This implies strong pre-Atari connections to Sam Tramiel. One of the other two is Leonard Tramiel, who came to the company from Columbia University with a Ph.D. in Astrophysics. The other is the only apparent "outsider", Michael Katz who previously worked for Epyx, Inc. and Coleco Industries, Inc. Is this bad? I don't think so. Let's look closer.

Family control is not without precedent in American industry, often with good results. The Ford family still wields enormous influence over the Ford Motor Company, one of the largest companies in the world and a fairly successful one, too.

They are not robbing the till for exhorbitant salaries. In fact, the salaries are rather low considering the responsibilities they carry. I'm not going to tell you what they make; you can get a copy of the prospectus if you really have to know. I'll go so far as to state that it would appear that Jack Tramiel is keeping the salaries of his sons very low. Mr. H. Ross Perot does not believe in huge salaries for executives who own a lot of stock, and it looks like Mr. Jack Tramiel agrees with him. It makes a lot of sense. When the company does good, the stock goes up. If not, it doesn't. The big stock holding executive with a low salary might work a lot harder to make the company do well so his stock value will increase. He should work harder than if he had a fat salary to skim "off the top" whether the bottom-line results were good or bad. Japanese companies recognize this and keep salaries low and bonuses high, relatively. The catch is no or low profit means no bonus.

Would you rather own stock in a company that has a boss whose personal fortune is tied up in it, or own Apple Computer? On November 25, 1986 the Chairman of the Board of Apple, John Scully, sold 107,000 shares of his Apple stock (about $4 million dollars worth) and now only holds 3,777 shares. Four other top executives of Apple sold a combined total of 110,000 shares. The top people, who presumably know the most about the place, have sold almost a quarter of a million shares! (The preceding facts on Apple stock sales appeared in the December 22 issue of Management Information Systems Week.)

Now please don't think I'm jumping to a lot of erroneous conclusions here. There is nothing "wrong" with the actions of the Apple executives. It is very common, in fact. Apple is a very strong company. For all I know, Mr. Scully and his associates had a dozen good reasons for selling. All I wish to point out is that I might feel better about any company I owned stock in, even Apple, if I knew the top man had a low salary and a large stock holding. It seems to be true of Atari.

That's the most impressive of my impressions of Atari/Tramiel from reading the 50-page prospectus. I found it quite fascinating, and look forward to seeing their first annual report to stockholders. I hope I can get a copy without buying the stock, however. My personal opinion is that at $19.25 a share it is overpriced. Sorry, Mr. Tramiel, but good luck to you anyway.

P.S. Oops!! I hope that wasn't stock market advice in the last paragraph. If it was, maybe you should ignore it. I wouldn't buy Chrysler stock when it was only about $3.00 a share.

Flying the ST

By Allen P. Bargen

A growing number of ST owners and users have been asking lately about the meaning of those annoying TOS error messages you get when everything does not go according to plan. Here is a verbose listing of the most commonly encountered ones that should help you.

TOS error codes:

0 OK no problems
1 GENERAL error
2 DRIVE NOT READY. Device was not ready, attached, or has been busy too long.
3 UNKNOWN COMMAND. Device did not understand you.
4 CRC ERROR. Soft read error.
5 BAD REQUEST. Device could not handle the command, although it understood it. Check your system parameters.
6 SEEK ERROR. Drive could not perform seek.
7 UNKNOWN MEDIA. Attempt to read unformatted or foreign media. Usually caused by a trashed or zeroed boot sector.
8 SECTOR NOT FOUND. The requested sector could not be found.
9 NO PAPER. The printer is out of paper.
10 WRITE FAULT. A write operation failed.
11 READ FAULT. A read operation failed.
12 GENERAL MISHAP. Reserved for future errors.
13 WRITE PROTECT. You attempted to write to a write protected disk.
14 MEDIA CHANGE. The media has been changed since the last write.
15 UNKNOWN DEVICE. The operation specified a device that the BIOS could not recognize.
16 BAD SECTORS. A format operation detected bad sectors.
17 INSERT DISK. A request for you to insert a disk.

GEMDOS ERROR CODES:

32 EINVFN. Invalid function number.
33 EFILNF. File not found.
34 EPTHNF. Path not found.
35 ENHNDL. No file descriptors left (too many files are open).
36 EACCND. Access Denied.
37 EIHNDL. Invalid file descriptor.
39 ENSMEM. Insufficient memory.
40 EIMBA. Invalid memory block address.
46 EDRIVE. Invalid drive specified.
49 EMNFIL. No more files.
64 ERANGE. Range Error.
65 EINTRN. Internal error.
66 EPLFMT. Invalid program load format.
67 EGSBF. Setblock failure due to growth restrictions.

Hope these help all who asked to see them listed. There are others, but they are rarely, if ever used, so I saw no need for including them.

Many of you are no doubt avid readers of any and all articles published for the ST computers. One of my favourite writers is Jerry Pournelle, a regular in BYTE, the prestigious MS-DOS magazine. Since the inception of the new ATARI computers, BYTE has covered the system fairly and accurately. Jerry has done several articles, and the coverage he gave the ST in the February issue was first class. He calls em like he sees em! P.S. He likes the ST. You might like to pick up this magazine just for the excellent information they print about the ST from their BIX network. Many excellent tips for programmers, or interested owners.

There ought to be some sort of Academy Awards for ST programs. The flow is so great these days, that it is becoming next to impossible to keep up

with in-depth reviews of all the new stuff. Some programs however, stand out for their imaginative use of the computers abilities.

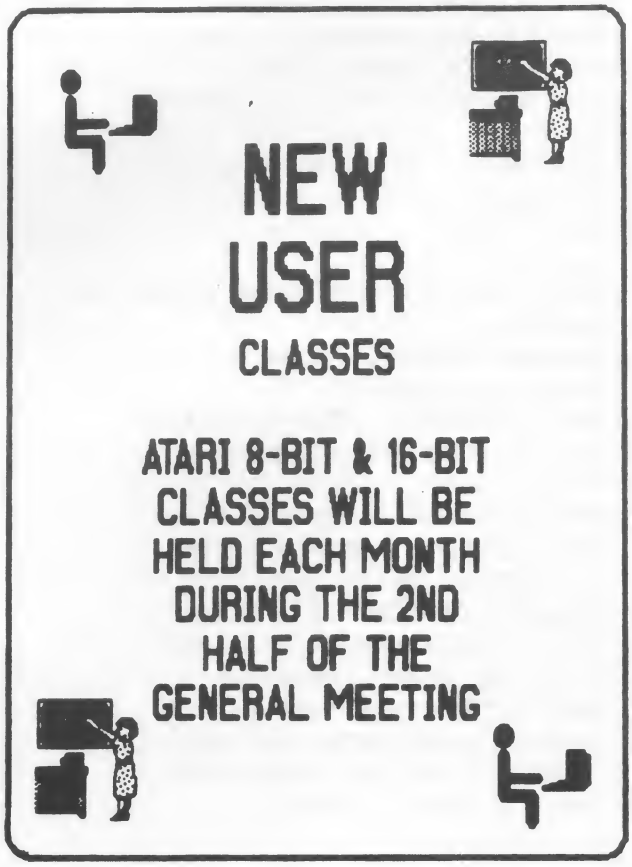
Here are a few that I would not hesitate suggesting to ST owners. You won't be disappointed in their performance. Consider the comments that follow "quickies", they are not for the exigent mind.

One such program is Publishing Partner. I can just hear the groans out there from the perfectionists who are angry because the program was released without all of it's font drivers. As released, the program can only properly print HELVETICA font, and that is a bother. The program has a few other 'minor' nuisance problems, BUT overall, it rates an award for excellence. The authors tell us that more fonts, and drivers will be released soon, and this should quiet the pessimists. This is not a review, but it is a recommendation. If you are looking for a desktop publisher that can give you professional looking printouts from most 9 pin printers, buy it.

Now where did I put that cheque stub?? If home accounting is not for you, go read Doonesbury while the rest of us discuss another of my choices for outstanding software. PHASAR is a new program from Europe that is everything you might want in a home accounting package. Easy to use, with most features you would ever need for such an application, it allows some creativity from the user for customizing your records. Well worth looking into.
Next, if CAD is your thing, First Cadd for the ST is a worthwhile program. It offers easy interface allowing you to create two dimensional objects rapidly and with ease. While not exactly an AutoCad clone, it is well worth it's modest price. If the editor is able to use some of the components supplied with this article, you will see what I mean. I found it simple to understand, and easy to implement.

Vaporware, or problems with Digital? At the time of this writing (February 15th) ATARI had still not requested FCC approval for their IBM compatible. Many competitors suggest the product may just be vaporware, and will never see the light of day. Time shall tell! FCC approval usually takes upwards of 40 days. Some ATARI insiders admit the machine still does not exist as a working unit.

And finally, a bit of shocking news for the creators of Magic Sac, the Macintosh emulator hardware add-on. Since early January, I have been working with a number of MAC programs that booted directly from my drive without help of the Magic Sac. How you ask? Easy, with the help of a special MAC TOS boot disc created by one of the many industrious programmers out there. The boot disc loads a special TOS into memory that allows the ST to run MAC programs that have been ported via modem to a standard ATARI disk. Recently, a modification to this software has been released that allows the ST to run MAC programs on a color system, so that opens up a whole new field as well. Such is the excitement of the ST computers. There is much more to come! Till next time ...



Atari at CES
Winter 1987

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Atari at CES -- Winter 1987
A sneak preview of what's new.

(Las Vegas -- January 7) -- The motto of Tramiel's Atari Corporation has just been updated. Instead of "Power Without The Price," Atari's battle cry is "Where the Action Is."

The action started with three major hardware announcements from Atari. First is Atari's introduction of the new "Mega" ST series. Atari has altered their 16-bit product line in both features and styling. The new STs are component systems, similar in appearance to an IBM PC, but less "clunky" -- they bear a sleek micro-stereo component look. A detachable keyboard connects via cable to a separate box housing the CPU, an included double-density 3 1/2 inch drive and a battery-sustained real-time calendar clock.

Cosmetically, the Mega STs are the same dove-gray ST color, the separated keyboard resembling a 1040 ST with the diagonal vent area sliced off. The keyboard, by the way, has a much crisper feel to it than current St keyboards, although key layout and the keytops themselves remain unchanged.

The new STs are designed as "open architecture" machines. Expansion devices such as add-on cards might be plugged into a peripheral box, which would then connect to the ST through the DMA port or bus expansion connector. In the future, such a box could feature dedicated chips, such as the new Motorola 68020 and the 68881 math coprocessor, giving blinding speed to graphics processing, real-time animation and other memory intensive, number-crunching functions. The Mega STs will be available in 1, 2 and 4 megabyte configurations, with prices reportedly starting at around $995. And yes, the Mega STs come with the blitter chip built in.

The second major announcement was the Atari ST Desktop Publishing System. An Atari ST "host" computer will serve as the front end for a laser printer "engine." As of this writing (Wednesday night, before CES officially opens) the manufacturer of Atari's laser printer has not been identified. (Perhaps Atari will name names at their press conference at 9:00 Thursday morning.) However, John Skruch at Atari told Antic Publishing the manufacturer was "one of the three biggest names in the laser printer business." The Atari laser printer promises virtually typeset quality electophotographic print technology with a 300 dot-per-inch resolution.

Third, and probably most unusual of Atari's new hardware announcements, was the Atari IBM PC compatible. That's right -- Atari has jumped into Compaq, Leading Edge and Hyundai territory by announcing their own IBM PC "clone" -- to retail for an amazing $495. The new Atari PC features an 8088 microprocessor with a switchable clock speed of 4.77 MHz or 8MHz. The PC will come with 512K standard, expandable to 640K of RAM, plus 256K of screen RAM. As Atari's press information states, the PC "supports these graphics modes: enhanced color adaptor (EGA), color graphics adaptor, monochrome display adaptor and Hercules graphics cards." The resolution is 640 X 350, either monochrome or color. The PC is equipped with standard ports:

parallel printer ports
RS232C serial port
plus built-in mouse support

Not surprisingly, it comes with a detachable keyboard (IBM PC/XT layout), and will accept a 8087 numeric coprocessor. The CPU box has a 360K 5 1/4-inch disk drive built in, and can

accept two additional external drives.

The PC's styling is similar to Atari's new STs -- either one would look sexy sitting on an executive (or home) desk. Atari hopes to use its PC as a front-end vehicle for their laser printer, and claims the PC will run "thousands of pieces of IBM software." And what was that graphics operating system software package we saw next to the Atari PC Clone? We'll get to that juicy gossip in our next report!

Those are the major Atari stories breaking before CES has actually started. Stay tuned to ANTIC ONLINE for more in-depth reports on Atari at CES. Later reports will focus on what's new in both 16- and 8-bit software and third-party peripherals for your favorite computers.

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Your fillers could appear here, see any MACE Officer or the Journal Editor.

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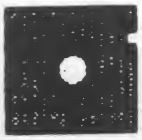
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